Rochester Freedom Singers

Holiday Concert
December 6, 1992

Dr. Theodore F. Ashizawa
Conductor

Rochester Freedom Singers

presents

A Holiday Concert

featuring

Benjamin Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols"

and

traditional holiday favorites

Dr. Theodore F. Ashizawa
Conductor

Joseph Steffan
Tenor

David Abbott
Pianist

Grace Wong
Harpist

Programme

A Ceremony of Carols — Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

1. Hodie Christus Natus Est
2. Wolcum Yole!
3. There Is No Rose
4. That Yonge Child
   Janis Keefe, Soprano
5. Balulalow
   Janis Keefe, Soprano
6. As Dew In Aprille
7. This Little Babe
8. Interlude
   Grace Wong, Harpist
9. In Freezing Winter Night
10. Spring Carol
    Janis Keefe, Soprano
    Bill Coleman, Tenor
11. Deo Gracias
12. Hodie Christus Natus Est

Rochester Freedom Singers
Grace Wong, Harpist

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O Holy Night — Adolphe Adam (1803-1856) arr. J. Rutter

Joseph Steffan, Tenor

Intermission

Bob Stear, Piano

Programme

Jesu. Joy of Man's Desiring — J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

David Abbott, Pianist — arr. Myra Hess

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The Birds — Benjamin Britten

The Night — Peter Warlock

The First Mercy (Premiere Merci) — Peter Warlock

Joseph Steffan, Tenor; David Abbott, Pianist

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O Come, O Come Emmanuel — arr. J. Rutter

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Star Candles — Michael Head

The Little Road to Bethlehem — Michael Head

Joseph Steffan, Tenor; David Abbott, Pianist

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Harpers Creek — Plantation Song, arr. Pooler

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Away In A Manger — arr. J. Rutter

Rochester Freedom Singers; Joseph Steffan, Tenor

Programme Notes

A Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) was premiered on December 5, 1942. It was originally written for treble voices with harp obligato. It has since been transcribed both for male chorus and mixed voices. It consists of a "Procession", nine carols and a "Recession" which is a repetition of the Procession. The carols are of medieval origin. Britten recreates in a modern musical language the style of ancient plain chant. The moods differ from carol to carol but the underlying style remains consistent.

The Christmas Carols we present are all familiar and date from the 15th to the 19th century. "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" is based on a 15th century French processional. One can imagine the chanting of the Monks. "O Holy Night", one of the most beloved carols, is the best known composition of the French composer Adolphe Adam (1803-1856). The child-like "Away in a Manger" was first published in "A Little Childrens' Book for schools and Families" of 1885. The words are anonymous, the melody by J.R. Murray. John Rutter is a contemporary British composer, conductor and arranger. Most of his original music and arrangements reflect the beauty of the English Choral tradition. One can imagine the great stone archways echoing the angelic sounds of the magnificent cathedral choirs in the flowing harmonies and descants of this music.

Programme notes by Janis Keefe.

Rochester Freedom Singers

Sopranos

Susan David
Melissa Gallison
Katia Iannacome
Janis Keefe
Dr. Kathleen Moore

Altos

Alexandra Carlo
Margaret R. Frantz
Doreen Yvette Lybrand
Eugenia H. Martin
Tracy Ann Vasile

Tenors

Bill Coleman
Marvin L. Duval
Mark Eckstein
Darryl Kittelberger
Michael L. Lee
Norris E. Minard
Bill Thompson

Basses

David Dolan
Larry Mancine
Paul Marrocco
Bob Riter
John R. Strand
Jonathan F. Wolfinger

Support Members

Matthew Murray - Technical Support Coordinator
Terry Hanney - Conceptual Design
Bill Coleman
Diana Kerns - Technical Support Assistant
Bob Stear - Assistant Accompanist
Kathleen Moore - Costume Design
Larry Mancine
Donna Lybrand - Program Design

Biographies

Dr. Theodore F. Ashizawa

Dr. Ashizawa is also the founder and the conductor of the Genesee Chorale and Ars Nova Singers. A native of San Francisco, California, he holds Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees from San Jose State. He received the prestigious Frank Damrosch Prize in Choral Conducting. He joined the faculty of Genesee Community College and soon after, received his Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from the University of Washington. Dr. Ashizawa was awarded the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching by the State University of New York in 1976.

Joseph Steffan

Joseph Steffan was born and raised in a small town in Minnesota. Currently he is studying law at the University of Connecticut. This concert marks the first time in nearly four years that he has sung in public. He was recognized as "The Voice of the Navy", singing the National Anthem for two televised Army / Navy football games and had an audience at the White House. Joseph has recently documented his life and career at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, in a book entitled, Honor Bound. The book explores his accomplishments, public humiliation, and personal struggle to gain justice through the legal system.

David Abbott

Mr. Abbot was presented in two highly successful debuts at the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C. and in Chicago on the Dame Myra Hess concert series, which were broadcast across the country on National Public Radio. In 1980, at the International Music Conference, in Geneva Switzerland, he was the only triple prize winner. These prizes included, a Bronze medal and two additional prizes for his performance. Mr. Abbott, as a member of the Idyllwild Trio, made an extensive tour of the Republic of China in 1988. A graduate of the Eastman and Juilliard Schools of Music, he has served on the faculties at the University of Nebraska, the Idyllwild School of Music of the Arts in California, the Kinhaven Music School, as well as the Rocky Ridge Music Center in Estes Park, Colorado. Mr. Abbott currently resides in Rochester, New York, where he had the distinction of being asked to simultaneously serve as the first Departmental Assistant for two artist faculty studios at Eastman. He recently performed Brahms' "First Piano Concerto" with much acclaim and is presently completing his Doctor of Music Arts degree in Performance & Literature.

Biographies

Grace Wong

Grace Wong has been Principal Harpist of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra since 1979. Born into a musical family, she began ballet and piano studies at age five, and majored in harp at the High School of Music and Art in her native New York City. At age twenty, she graduated with honors from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and in 1973 won second prize at the Triennial International Harp Contest in Israel, the world's leading harp competition. The following year she made her Carnegie Recital Hall debut. There, she began a solo career, in conjunction with her orchestral and chamber work, which has taken her around the world. Superlative notices have been her trademark -- "beyond reproach" said the New York Times-- and in 1983 she became the first western harpist invited to perform in China and teach master classes at the great conservatories in Peking and Shanghai. She is now a jury member, rather than a contestant, at the International Harp Contest, and teaches privately.

Brian W. Ambrose

A native of Rutland, Vermont, he holds certification as an interpreter from the state of Texas. Brian has interpreted at safe-sex workshops at the community Health Network and performances at the Nazareth College Arts Center. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech and Language Pathology, is a full time free-lance interpreter, and teaches sign language classes at St. Rita's Church in Webster.

Janis Keefe

Janis Keefe is a native of Rochester and registered nurse working as the Domicilary Care Supervisor at the Genesee County Nursing Home in Batavia. She has sung with the Rochester Oratorio Society, the Genesee Chorale and the Ars Nova Singers. She is also active in community theater in Batavia. Solo performances include "Messiah" by Handel, "The Creation" by Haydn, and "B Minor Mass" by Bach.

Acknowledgments

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Dick Moore	Dutchtown 212
Tony & Carol Vasile	
Brothers United	

John Strand and Larry Mancine, Co-founders of the Rochester Freedom Singers

and to our new friend, Joseph Steffan, for volunteering both his time and talent to help us deliver our message of unity to one and all.